



*The Parish of Maindee  
St John's Choir*

We still try to maintain contact with everyone even though the lockdown seems to be easing very cautiously in Wales. We have received many welcome comments about keeping in touch by distributing the Parish Lockdown Magazine to members of the choir and congregation and, particularly to those who are alone, unable to attend church for whatever reason and neighbours who may enjoy a good chuckle at some of the pages. Phyl Taylor's great idea has been a morale booster to many people and I am grateful to Phyl for her work in collating and printing the magazines. I help Phyl by arranging delivery: by hand, via email and by post and I am also grateful to Isabelle Paradice and Revd Chris and Brian Hockey for walking miles to deliver magazines by hand.

I'm sure you will be amazed to learn that we distribute 110 Lockdown magazines: 58 via email, 42 by hand delivery and ten in the post. I leave these ten at the Vicarage and leave Fr Will and his lads to stamp and post.

The choir members continue to record virtual music for services in the parishes of Maindee and Lliswerry and also for use by Bishop Cherry in her Sunday services from Bishopstow. We have recorded A Peace Blessing, sung by the girls and Lead me Lord, a simple anthem sung by the girls and the adults, many of whom are coming to terms with the technology and singing on their own without accompaniment!! We then send all the voices to Canon David Neale who does the rest!! Clever!!!

As I am completing these notes I've just received a telephone call from David Neale telling me that our virtual choir rendition of Lead me Lord will be used during the live streaming of the ordination on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June at the Cathedral. This will be an interesting ordination service as only one Deacon will be ordained Priest in the Cathedral because of the Covid-19 restrictions. Other ordinations will be virtual!! You may catch up with this service via the Cathedral website service [newportcathedral.org.uk](http://newportcathedral.org.uk)

I have also been very pleased that Lily Murray's dad, Lloyd, an IT expert who enjoys producing music digitally, has offered to help by recording and producing the tracks. I spend time in church with Lily and Lloyd doing the recordings of the organ music, Lily then sings the lead vocal part and this is then sent, via me, to the choir. They listen to the music via headphones on one device and record themselves singing alone on another device. Again, clever!! But this takes some getting used to. Lloyd is currently working on a piece, Spirit of the Living God, for Fr Will to use during the communion part of the on-line services for Caerwent and Maindee Ministry Areas. Will only wanted a few voices for this so we recorded four girls, four altos, two tenors and two basses with the organ.

I am hoping that many of you will listen in to any of these services and enjoy the virtual choir pieces, which, by the way, can also be heard on the church website, kindly posted by Mark Stevens, our webmaster. I plan to record several communion hymns for use on these websites in the coming weeks. I really am extremely pleased with the way the choir adults persevered to get their recordings to me and to David for his expertise and patience. The girls, needless to say, had no problems recording their contributions!!

I hope that many of you might have watched that wonderful choirmaster and musician, Gareth Malone in his programme "Singing for Britain" on BBC recently. What a talented guy Gareth is and I love to watch his efforts to get Britain singing in various environments. In a review in my daily newspaper, I read some things that I wholeheartedly agree with and thought I would share a few of these comments.

What Gareth and I have been trying to do is to keep people in choirs involved and active and I have loved the virtual choir pieces we have recorded with the super help of David Neale. Yet Gareth hits the nail on the head: "What we are doing, relies on technology and this, surely, reduces the deepest satisfaction of choral singing, which is the organic and spontaneous creation of harmony.

A true choir isn't made up of isolated individuals making their own particular noises, it's a community that unites its participants in purpose and emotion. **A virtual choir is a contradiction in terms: whether it's a wedding or funeral, Christmas carols or a sing-song on the way home, it's all about being there. How long before**

**we can have that joy back?"** Oh, how true are these last comments, which I am sure will be echoed by all members of St John's choir.

One little bit of news: John Beal, a former member of the choir, well into his 90s has been in hospital with non-covid issues but his daughter was very worried that he might contract covid whilst in hospital. I'm pleased to tell you that John is now home, covid free and recovering well with his daughter. Best wishes, JB, from all members of the choir.

I do hope that those of you with internet access, whether on mobile phone, iPad or computer, will take a regular look at the church website and take a look at the Virtual Maindee and Lliswerry Parishes on-line services hosted by Father Will, Revd Sally and Revd Linda.

**Read more: <http://www.stjohnsmaindee.org.uk>**

***John Granger***